

tort reform piece of this, which is billions of dollars a year that is unnecessarily spent on tests that are done to protect from the liability that is there.

With these packages, other good ideas that come from other Members doing this in the fashion and vision by our Founding Fathers, we go out to where all of the solutions are, out to the voices and ideas of the people, bring those ideas here.

Each of us, our job, the gentlewoman from Wyoming's job and mine, is to sort through the good ideas, bring the best ideas here to Washington, let our best ideas compete with the other good ideas, and put that out on the President's desk for the solutions that we really need.

I appreciate the attention and the opportunity to speak.

Mrs. LUMMIS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Iowa for his leadership on this issue, for being a devoted husband, father, and father-in-law.

I know that the women in his life have influenced his perspective on these healthcare issues, as have so many of us. I thank him for participating in this discussion, this Special Order, celebrating Women's History Month.

I want to conclude the Special Order by highlighting two Republican women with whom I serve in Congress who are truly doing courageous things in their lives with their families.

First of all, Congresswoman CATHY McMORRIS RODGERS, who is the highest ranking Republican woman in this conference, is our conference leader. She is the mother of three children.

One is a special needs child, a friend to all of us, a delightful young man who was born while she was serving in Congress, as were her other two children.

The devotion that CATHY McMORRIS RODGERS has to her family and to parents of special needs children has brought about important legislation that is good for parents and special needs children all over this country.

As we celebrate this Women's History Month, I want to acknowledge our colleague CATHY McMORRIS RODGERS for her important role in this Congress as a leader on this issue and many others.

I also want to acknowledge our colleague JAIME HERRERA BEUTLER, who is from the State of Washington. JAIME, during a pregnancy which occurred while she also was serving as a Member of this Congress, as she still does, experienced a pregnancy that would have brought about the death of her child.

But because she was courageous enough to test and, like Laura's Law, allow a rather experimental treatment where she was injected with a saline solution in utero that allowed that baby to continue to mature until its birth, at which point it was allowed to grow and had dialysis, and then, at a point at which that child had become big enough and healthy enough, received an organ transplant from JAIME

HERRERA BEUTLER's husband, the father of the child.

That child and that father and that mother, who we continue to serve with here in this Congress, are all doing well. This is the first known child to survive, given the condition that that child was identified as having before it was born.

Most doctors recommend that a parent terminate that pregnancy or, in many cases, that pregnancy will be terminated on its own without any involvement outside of the womb.

But in JAIME'S case, she took the extraordinary step of having a saline injection to allow that child to continue to grow and mature in a way that allowed it to be born.

This is a lovely child, another friend of all of ours, because, occasionally, that child visits us here in the Cloakroom behind this floor of the House.

What an honor to serve with these two courageous mothers who, while having these children and going through these extraordinary issues, are serving their States, their districts, their Nations in this Congress, and contributing to uplifting women in this country through their service to this Congress.

As I conclude this tribute to Women's History Month, I want to remind people that women in this Congress are making a difference with regard to legislation that affects all of us, whether they are in the avenues of natural resources, water, air—the areas that I spend most of my time on—whether they are in the areas of health care, jobs, or higher education.

The areas that women in Congress are interested in are as diverse as the areas that men are interested in, but women bring a different perspective to those same issues. Women look out into the future.

When I served in the Wyoming Legislature, our chief clerk, who sits up there just as these folks do and observes what is happening, was one day asked: Can you tell a difference between the way men and women legislate, regardless of whether they are Democrats or Republicans?

He said: Absolutely. Women are looking to the future. They are not focused on the next election. They are focused beyond the next election for what will be good for their children, their grandchildren, and future of the Nation.

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As I observed his comments throughout my legislative years in Wyoming and now throughout my legislative years here, I think there is some truth to that. That is why I think it is so important that women be involved in the legislative process and participate in this great institution, which is the Congress of the United States, for the betterment of future generations.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

## CONGRESSIONAL PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS: THE PEOPLE'S BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

### GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, on Monday night, we got word of a decision that may be the death knell for the budget proposal made by the majority of this body. The members of the self-styled Freedom Caucus have announced their refusal to support the plan that their own leadership has put forward. I am truly afraid of what they would offer as an alternative, because the budget being considered in committee this week is a far cry from what American families need.

Mr. Speaker, at its most fundamental level, a budget is two things: a guiding document and a statement of values. The budget that the House Republicans have put forward—the budget that is not enough for the Freedom Caucus—makes it clear that they value special interests more than working families. It is a guiding document to an America that is bereft of opportunity for those who have worked or have studied or have fought for it.

My colleagues and I are here on the floor tonight to support a very different plan—a budget that seeks to give everyday Americans the only opportunity they have ever asked for—the opportunity to work hard, to play by the rules, and to get ahead. It is a budget for the people, so it shouldn't come as a surprise that we call it The People's Budget.

Mr. Speaker, the Congressional Progressive Caucus budget would invest in our schools, our roads, our bridges, our workers, and our environment to put us back on the path to prosperity in a way that austerity never will, because the cuts of the past few years should have made one thing clear: trimming our spending does little to impact the long-term deficit, but it destroys working families, hinders the most vulnerable Americans, and threatens the future of our Nation.

The People's Budget would invest \$1 trillion in our bridges, roads, railways, and other infrastructure facilities to prevent the kind of devastating failures we have witnessed in Flint, Michigan.

The People's Budget would fully fund Head Start, capitalizing on one of the best opportunities to give our young

people a leg up in an increasingly global economy.

The People's Budget would take steps to make debt-free college a reality for students, keeping higher education as a ladder into economic prosperity rather than making it a privilege for top earners.

The People's Budget would fully fund affordable housing programs, and it would end persistent family homelessness with an investment of \$11 billion.

The People's Budget would take a stand on protecting our environment from further damage by investing in clean and renewable energy resources and ending subsidies for oil, gas, and coal once and for all. And that is just the beginning.

Our economy may be rebounding from the Great Recession, but there are plenty of Americans who have been left behind—stuck in roles with low wages, in long-term unemployment, in the gender and racial pay gaps that persist in this Nation, or in debt that keeps them from progressing in their lives. We can't afford to let this stand. We need a budget for the people, and we need it now.

Mr. Speaker, the budget that was announced by the majority yesterday is truly a roadmap to ruin. It would leave seniors out in the cold by ending the Medicare guarantee. It would gut domestic programming with \$6.5 trillion in cuts—the most outrageous and threatening action ever proposed by the majority on the Budget Committee. It would make the gap between average Americans and the wealthy few too great to bridge, taking away any chance at restoring the vibrant middle class our economy relies on. It would do the same thing that my colleagues have tried to do for some time, which would be to stack the deck for top earners and the well-connected at the expense of everyone else.

The people need change. The people need a plan that levels the playing field, that gives them opportunities to succeed, and that puts their interests above the interests of corporations and the wealthy. The people need salaries to let them do more than just make ends meet. The people need a way to pay for affordable child care while they are at their jobs. The people need education for their children and teachers who are trained to give students the tools to succeed. They need roads that aren't crumbling and trains that stay on the tracks; they need bridges and tunnels that connect them with their jobs without their having to spend hours in traffic; and they need job training to find employment in a changing economy.

The people, Mr. Speaker, need The People's Budget.

I yield to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON), my colleague and the chairman of the Congressional Progressive Caucus.

Mr. ELLISON. I thank the Representative WATSON COLEMAN. I appreciate the gentlewoman's leadership

during the Progressive Caucus Special Order hour. Every week, she helps give the world the progressive message, and I am so grateful that she does.

Mr. Speaker, let me mention that The People's Budget is really not just some document that members of the Progressive Caucus, when huddled in a room, drafted up. We actually believed that the people ought to participate in the writing of The People's Budget, so we engaged not only the ideas of constituents from our districts but also those from other people, like from the Economic Policy Institute, the people in the labor community, and others, who all had great ideas about how to formulate our budget. Altogether, we included the ideas of 44 different groups and of many, many individuals beyond that to support and help us draft The People's Budget. We want to thank all of them.

This really is a People's Budget because it puts forward the main thing that any budget ought to put forward in a budget from Congress, and that is the promotion of good-paying jobs.

Now, just because the unemployment rate has gotten to a lower level doesn't mean that we have got a great jobs picture for working Americans. The People's Budget would increase good-paying jobs by 3.6 million, and we are very proud of that. While Republicans may think that the best way to judge a budget is by how many dollars from the Federal budget they cut, we believe that the main way to judge a budget is by how many Americans are put to work in good-paying jobs.

How do we create these jobs?

One, by investing in our infrastructure. The People's Budget invests in \$1 trillion so that we can rebuild our roads, bridges, railways, water systems, and grids. We make sure that the crumbling infrastructure that faces us right now gets fixed. That includes infrastructure in Flint, Michigan, and in other cities around this country where water infrastructure is so hard-pressed.

Beyond that, we will provide the protections that American workers need. The People's Budget calls for the protection of collective bargaining; it works to close the pay equity gap; it increases funding for worker protection agencies that crack down on wage theft and overtime abuses—but that \$1 trillion will also save American lives.

Two weeks ago, I and many members of the Congressional Progressive and Black Caucuses traveled to Flint, Michigan, and I saw firsthand what happens when governments are run like a business. When money is the only consideration and when the Governor thinks that passing an emergency manager law just to cut costs at the expense of children's health and clean water, we see what the results of that kind of thinking are and that it is penny-wise, but incredibly pound-foolish. I met dozens of families who were exposed to dangerous levels of lead, but also people who were touched by the evils of Legionnaires' disease because of waterborne illness.

The People's Budget includes \$765 million for the city of Flint so that we can replace toxic pipelines and provide health and education services for residents. Flint isn't the only city that is exposing residents to lead; so The People's Budget also includes \$150 billion for waterlines nationwide.

We can never allow a tragedy like Flint's to happen again, but we have to make the investments right now. It is a simple choice: Do we believe that we should have a State's tax cuts go to the richest dead people? Should we cut their taxes? Should we cut the taxes of multinational, giant, profitable corporations? Or should we spend the money to help ensure the health and welfare of American children and other citizens?

I think we should look out for the American people. The People's Budget does that. We are glad to have the support of so many organizations, and we look forward to a very strong vote when the day arrives.

#### STOP VIOLENCE IN HONDURAS

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, I want to make another statement which is unrelated to our budget, but it is still very important.

I am profoundly saddened and angered by the murders of Berta Caceres and Nelson Garcia, two leading environmental activists in the nation of Honduras. These two murders were less than 2 weeks apart. It is an ongoing challenge that must be addressed immediately.

Ms. Caceres spent decades fighting for the rights of Honduras' indigenous community, winning the Goldman Environmental Prize—an internationally recognized award—for her work. She was assassinated in her home while she was supposed to be under special protection by government security forces.

Mr. Garcia was a member of Ms. Caceres' organization, the Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras. He was shot yesterday in front of his mother-in-law's home.

Honduras and the world have lost two extraordinary advocates for environmental and indigenous rights, and also for social justice.

We need to do more than mourn their losses. It is time to act. It is time to suspend assistance to the Honduras security forces until such time as we know they are not penetrated by illegal actors; until such time as we can be assured when they say they are going to protect somebody, those people are protected; and until we know and have confidence that American taxpayers' dollars are not being used to assassinate leaders who are doing nothing more than trying to improve the environment and increase the rights of indigenous people.

These assassinations fit into a pattern of attacks that has taken place against Honduran activists since the 2009 military coup. The NGO Global

Witness calls Honduras the most dangerous place in the world for environmental activists. More than 100 environmental activists have been killed in the last 5 years there, and many activists and community leaders remain at risk. We must do everything in our power to stop this violence and harassment in Honduras.

Please rest in peace, Berta Caceres and Nelson Garcia. The people who remain behind will continue to fight for environmental justice and indigenous rights, and we here in the United States join that fight.

U.S. SUPREME COURT NOMINEE MERRICK GARLAND

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, before I close, I want to spend a few minutes on another important topic as well.

Today, President Obama nominated Chief Justice Merrick Garland to fill the vacancy that has been left on the Supreme Court by Associate Justice Antonin Scalia.

Judge Garland has more Federal judicial experience than any Supreme Court nominee in history. His work on the D.C. circuit court, an appointment to which he was confirmed with strong bipartisan support, has earned praise from Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle. He is qualified. He is competent. He is not the ultraliberal that many of my conservative colleagues feared.

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Yet, following up on his promise that the Senate would consider absolutely no one that President Obama put forward, Majority Leader MITCH MCCONNELL said today: "It is a president's constitutional right to nominate a Supreme Court justice, and it is the Senate's constitutional right to act as a check on a president and withhold its consent."

I beg to differ. I think it is the President's constitutional responsibility, not just a prerogative, to fill the bench of the Supreme Court. Withholding consent, something that is typically done when a candidate is underqualified or inappropriate, is far different than just ignoring the process altogether.

This is a political decision made about the only body that shouldn't be exposed to such things. It goes beyond just a filibuster or commentary from a few outliers.

And if Republicans follow through with their plan, it would constitute the longest vacancy with no vote on a nominee ever. There is no precedent for this. There have been appointments, nominations, and, above all, hearings during Presidential election years.

It is flat out ridiculous to refuse a man as qualified as Judge Garland even hearings. This is a dereliction of duty that surpasses the sadly run-of-the-mill inability of the majority to get anything done, from funding the government until the eleventh hour to

passing a budget, to actually governing.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I came to the floor without taking the time to say this: The Senate must change course and consider Judge Garland on his merits. He has earned bipartisan support before, and he deserves it again.

I need to remind this body and the Senate that the President of the United States was elected for a second term and that term includes four full years.

Mr. Speaker, I conclude my Special Order hour.

I yield back the balance of my time.

#### HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 121

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Ms. GABBARD) is recognized for the remainder of the hour as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week there were a few very important votes that occurred on complex issues that I would like to discuss here today. They were with regards to H. Con. Res. 75 and H. Con. Res. 121, which is the one I will discuss now.

Make no mistake. H. Con. Res. 121 is a war bill. It is a thinly veiled attempt to use the rationale of humanitarianism as a justification for overthrowing the Syrian Government of Assad.

Similar resolutions were used in the past to legitimize the regime-change wars to overthrow the governments of Iraq and Libya. I will have no part of it. I voted "no" on H. Con. Res. 121. I voted "no" against more unnecessary interventionist regime-change wars.

We all know that Bashar al-Assad, President of Syria, is a brutal dictator. But this resolution's purpose is not merely to recognize him as such. Rather, it was a call to action. Specifically, it is a call to escalate our war to overthrow the Syrian Government of Assad.

For the last 5 years, the United States, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and others have been working hand in hand in that war to overthrow the Assad Government, supposedly for humanitarian reasons. But I ask: How has this war to overthrow Assad actually helped humanity?

Hundreds of thousands of Syrians have been killed. Millions have become homeless refugees. Much of the country's infrastructure has been destroyed.

Terrorist organizations like ISIS, al Qaeda, and others have taken over large areas of the country and are engaging in genocide.

Now the same people who are behind this war to overthrow Assad want to escalate that war, and this resolution is an attempt to gin up public support for that escalation.

This resolution urges the administration to create "additional mechanisms

for the protection of civilians," which is really coded language for the creation of a so-called no-fly zone or safe zone.

The creation of this no-fly zone or safe zone in Syria would be a major escalation of the war. Doing this would cost billions of dollars, require tens of thousands of ground troops, and a massive U.S. air presence. It won't work.

Furthermore, it will likely result in a direct confrontation between the United States and Russia. Fortunately, President Obama has thus far opposed implementing such a so-called no-fly zone and has resisted pressure to escalate this war in this way.

The fact is that the main areas currently in Syria where Christian, Alawites, Druze, Yazidis, and other religious minorities can practice their faith without fear of persecution are in the Syrian territories where Assad maintains control.

Therefore, the overthrow of Assad would worsen the genocidal activities by ISIS and al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations against Christians, Alawites, and other Syrian religious minorities.

If the U.S. has learned nothing else from Iraq and Libya, we should have learned that toppling ruthless dictators in the Middle East creates even more human suffering and strengthens our enemy, groups like ISIS and other terrorist organizations in those countries.

It is undeniable that, in both Iraq and Libya, humanitarian conditions today are far worse than they were before those governments were toppled and ISIS and other terrorist organizations are far more powerful with greater strongholds, causing even more suffering.

If the U.S. is successful in its current efforts to overthrow the Syrian Government of Assad, allowing groups like ISIS and al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations to take over all of Syria, which is what will happen, including those Assad-controlled areas where Christians and other religious minorities remain protected, the United States will be morally culpable for the genocide that will occur as a result.

This is exactly what happened when we overthrew Saddam Hussein in Iraq. It is what happened in Libya when we overthrew Muammar Gaddafi. To do the same thing over and over and expect a different result is the definition of insanity.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

#### ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) for 30 minutes.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to be recognized to address you here on the floor of the United States House of Representatives